

# Who is Responsible for Infrastructure?

*“Many historic accomplishments of the last century were the product of partnerships with private companies, universities and other governments that brought together the talent needed to do something that no one had done before. The Internet is one example.”*

“Better.Gov: Engineering Technology Enhanced Government,”  
November, 2000  
Little Hoover Commission



PHOTO CREDIT: D. KOLKE/CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

## Sharing Responsibility

Building and financing the state’s infrastructure is a shared responsibility, accomplished through and by various investment partners. Government cannot bridge the infrastructure gap alone. California state government (the State), local governments, regional agencies, private and nonprofit entities, philanthropic organizations, and the federal government are all important partners in meeting our large and diverse infrastructure needs. All partners must contribute to the planning, financing, development, monitoring, maintenance, and improvement of infrastructure. Building the foundation for California’s future prosperity is not solely the responsibility of the State.

### THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The State has a unique role in this partnership. It is responsible not only for direct investment of resources, where appropriate, but also for providing a vision and a policy framework for cohesive, cost-effective planning and investment by all partners. The State must leverage and link with other public and private institutions for maximum infrastructure benefits, including increasing the ability of other partners such as local governments to participate more fully in financing infrastructure improvements. State and local governments are also responsible for engaging the diverse partners to enable full and effective coordination across infrastructure systems. The federal government is an important partner in program, regulatory and funding support, and its support should reflect the significance of California in the national and world economies.

### THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Today’s businesses, including the agricultural community, recognize that it is in their best interest to invest in California’s infrastructure. Ensuring sustainability, quality of life and continued economic growth for California creates a healthy environment for a growing business and its employees. An investment in California’s infrastructure is an investment in economic prosperity. Most of California’s infrastructure, such as housing, is built and financed by the private sector. It is often the source of innovative solutions and best practices. The private sector often provides statewide and regional leadership required to elicit change in public policy, and widespread application of new techniques and technologies. Such leadership was instrumental in the recent successful efforts to pass Propositions 12 and 13, the parks and water bonds, and Proposition 39, lowering the vote threshold for local school bonds.

## THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION, PHILANTHROPIC AND NONPROFIT SECTORS

Creative thinking, applied research, and deeper and broader understanding of our issues at the grassroots level is often provided by our educational and philanthropic institutions. These institutions provide innovative ideas, have the confidence of Californians, and provide important leadership in helping us to make tough choices. The philanthropic sector also provides a long-term vision and seed funding for innovative projects. Nonprofit community-based organizations play an important role in implementing these projects at the local level.

## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

California's newspapers, radio and television are powerful instruments for public education on complex issues. Their involvement will help inform California voters about the smart choices we can make to meet our needs more effectively. Many journalists track the progress and performance of infrastructure planning and investment and help provide accountability and democracy in the process.

## THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS

Individuals have a civic responsibility to understand and engage in the decision-making process as it involves investment of our resources and affects our quality of life. Individuals must support their local, regional, and state leadership to make the best long-term decisions for our communities. As we have learned through the energy crisis, individual choices and behavior have a great impact on how we use and conserve our resources.

# Unique Roles of State and Local Government

As the primary provider of public services and facilities and a major infrastructure investor, the public sector has critical responsibilities that cannot be filled by other partners.

## ENSURE ACCESS TO PUBLIC GOODS

The public sector must facilitate or provide access to essential services and shared resources, such as energy, water and telecommunications. At a minimum, policy and regulations must protect consumers and structure equitable markets for these goods.

*"Our regional stewardship develops shared solutions. This represents the potential of broader ownership of our region's future, where everybody assumes responsibility for our economic, environmental and social well-being. It signals a shift from fragmented decision-making to higher-leveraged, more integrated, collaborative approaches."*

Silicon Valley 2010, Joint Venture:  
Silicon Valley Network, 1998



PHOTO CREDITS:  
TOP: SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION  
MIDDLE: FRESNO, R. HOLMES/CALIFORNIA TECHNOLOGY,  
TRADE AND COMMERCE AGENCY  
BOTTOM: LAWRENCE HALL OF SCIENCE, U.C. BERKELEY,  
R. HOLMES/CALIFORNIA TECHNOLOGY, TRADE AND COMMERCE AGENCY

## PROVIDE PUBLIC SERVICES

Government is the provider of most public services. For example, to obtain a driver's license, people must interact with government facilities and employees. Local governments are the access points for health and human services, planning and building services. It is the obligation of the public sector to provide good service, sensitive to the diverse needs of its customers, and access options at a fair price.

## LEAD IN INNOVATION AND NEW MODELS

The public sector can provide strong leadership in fostering adoption of innovative techniques and practices, such as the Governor's Executive Order for Sustainable Buildings.



*The Joe Serna Jr. California Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters building and courtyard in Sacramento, California, incorporate energy-efficient design and civic art and architecture.*

PHOTO CREDIT: CITY OF SACRAMENTO

### **“Building California’s Sustainable Future, A Blueprint for State Facilities”**

EXECUTIVE ORDER D-16-00, GOVERNOR GRAY DAVIS.

The State invests \$2 billion annually for design, construction and renovation and more than \$600 million annually for energy, water and waste disposal at state funded facilities. The goal of this initiative is to site, design, deconstruct, construct, renovate, operate and maintain state buildings that are models of energy, water and materials efficiency, while providing healthy, productive and comfortable indoor environments and long-term benefits to Californians.

## BUILD FACILITIES THAT BUILD COMMUNITIES

State and municipal entities have a unique role in providing facilities for public services. Effective public sector investments positively impact the overall community through sensitive design integrated within the fabric of the community. Civic architecture can create centers of community focus and stimulate economic activity. In some of the most compelling examples, great civic architecture gives new life and pride to communities. Public facilities and buildings, such as transportation systems and schools, also impact how and where growth and development occur and support community revitalization efforts.

## DEVELOP EFFECTIVE POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Policies and funding structures inherently create requirements and incentives that directly impact infrastructure investment decisions. The public sector must design frameworks to ensure the desired results, perform mandated functions such as environmental and disability accessibility reviews, and monitor the impact of policy decisions on an ongoing basis. It is the role of government to ensure compliance with these requirements and recommend policies to meet evolving needs.

# Different Partnership Roles for Different Infrastructure Types

Partnership roles vary depending on the types of infrastructure under development. For example, to fund, design and build educational facilities involves an extended process and many partners at different stages of development:

- The State oversees the state funding allocation process, enforces environmental regulation and sets design standards.
- Local government and school boards provide local funding, facilitate community collaboration for siting and design, and endorse appropriate joint-use opportunities for the facility.
- Educators, parents and community members pass the state and local school bonds and support the effort.
- Contractors and their workers build the school.

*This Commission strongly believes that a committed and sustained partnership among the public and private sectors and the people of our State, is essential to understand, adopt and implement the full breadth and depth of the Commission's recommendations included in this report. All of us, all Californians, bear the responsibility for building the infrastructure of the 21st Century.*



PHOTO CREDIT: LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA, SCRIPPS RANCH AND THURGOOD MARSHALL MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER JOINT USE FACILITY, J. BRADY/ROESLING NAKAMURA ARCHITECTS INC.